



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

# Advisory Circular

**Subject: English Language Skill Standards  
Required by 14 CFR Parts 61, 63, and  
65**

**Date: 9/23/97**

**Initiated by:  
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**Change:**

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular (AC) provides guidance for airman applicants, training organizations, designated examiners, and aviation safety inspectors in determining English language skills required for airman certification under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 61, 63, and 65.

2. BACKGROUND. There are distinct regulatory English language requirements in 14 CFR part 61 for pilots, and flight and ground instructors; part 63, for flight navigators and flight engineers; and part 65, for dispatchers, mechanics, repairmen, and parachute riggers.

a. Part 61 requires that pilots, and flight and ground instructors must be able to read, write, speak, and understand the English language. If the applicant cannot meet these requirements of English fluency, an airman certificate cannot be issued. For medical reasons, an appropriate limitation may be placed on the certificate.

b. Parts 63 and 65 require that if a flight navigator, mechanic, repairman, or parachute rigger cannot read, write, speak, or understand the English language, an appropriate limitation may be placed on the certificate.

c. Sections 63.31(b), flight engineers; and 65.53(b), aircraft dispatchers, requirements differ slightly. The applicant must be able to read, speak, and understand the English language. If unable, an appropriate limitation may be placed on the certificate.

3. COMPETENCY GUIDANCE. When there is a question of an applicant meeting the English language requirements, the examiner will determine the applicant's ability to read, speak, write, and understand the English language. The examiner will evaluate the applicant's speech and accent, if any, relative to sentence patterns, sentence structure, spelling of written text, and in the case of an air traffic control clearance, use of standard clearance terminology.

a. For all certification testing, applicants will be required to read a section of a technical manual, and then write and explain their interpretation of that reading. An appropriate technical manual in this sense means an airplane flight manual, a maintenance manual, or other publications as appropriate for the certificate or rating sought.

b. For practical tests involving airport tower services and Flight Service Station (FSS) en route services, examiners will simulate typical communications and require the applicant to copy and read back the communication.

c. For practical tests requiring the receiving and acknowledgment of air traffic control instrument flight rule clearances, examiners will simulate typical clearance deliveries and require the applicant to copy and read back the clearances.

d. If applicants can demonstrate the ability to write and explain the intent of a selected reading, and read back simulated communications with little or no hesitation and/or misunderstanding, they will have satisfactorily met the intent of the English language requirement. Airman applicants, whose English language skills are still in

question, shall be referred to the local Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) for evaluation by an aviation safety inspector.

4. RESPONSIBILITY. It is important that all airman applicants demonstrate their ability to read, speak, write, and understand the English language. Each applicant must demonstrate an ability to mentally grasp critical information which often must be read and understood while conducting a variety of aviation operations. The responsibility for ensuring applicants meet the English language requirements is shared by flight and ground instructors, aviation schools, designated examiners, and aviation safety inspectors. Ultimately, the designated examiner and the aviation safety inspector are required to evaluate each applicant's eligibility, including English fluency, prior to beginning the practical test or accepting an application for an airman certificate or rating.

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